With Heart

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With Heart

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Summary

Hannibal packed Will's lunch and we finally get to meet Will's friends at university. Oh, and then there is Will's lab parter. Part of the Evolution series.

“What in the hell is that?” Jimmy said as Will took out a package from his backpack that Hannibal had carefully prepared this morning.

“My lunch,” Will said and placed the package on the scratched university table in the engineering lounge. The table top was strangely sticky and had a smear of something pink on it.

“Why can’t you just eat some crap out the vending machine like the rest of us plebs?” Jimmy asked. He grabbed a chip from a crumpled back and popped it in his mouth, chewing noisily.

“‘Cause he’s too Bourgeoisie now,” Brian said. “Just slumming with us plebs.”

“Proletariat,” Beverly corrected.

“Who cares? I’m not some arts major, Katz,” Brian said as if it was vulgar. He poked the package. “Why is it wrapped in brown paper and a string?”

“Dude, I didn’t know corners could be that crisp on paper,” Jimmy added and poked it with his finger as well. “It smells okay but I have been deceived by your lunch before.”

“The presentation is part of the experience,” Will said and carefully pulled on the white string wrapped around the butcher paper to reveal a gourmet sandwich.

“The presentation is part of the experience,” Jimmy echoed in a horrible vaguely German sounding accent. “Pretentious.”

“That doesn’t even sound like him,” Beverly said. “Stop being an asshole, Jimmy.”

“What is it?” Brian asked.

“Grilled beef heart and onion sandwich with garlic basted mushrooms on sour dough accentuated salsa verde,” Will repeated the menu Hannibal had told him this morning.

“Ewww, heart,” Brian said.

“Awww, heart,” Beverly said at the same time as Brian. “I get what he was going for there. It’s sweet.”

Jimmy made a gagging sound. “Gross. Hard pass.”

“Be still my beating heart,” Brian said.

Jimmy elbowed Brian. “Be still the non-beating heart.”

“Shut up you, too,” Beverly said. “I think it’s cute.”

“I thought we were going to review for the mechanics lab?” Jimmy asked. He noisily ate another chip.

“I know you may not be capable of doing two things at once, but I’m perfectly capable of eating and reviewing for mechanics lab,” Will said.

“You don’t need to review for mechanics, Will,” Beverly said. “The machines love you.”

“Resistance is futile,” Brian said in his best Borg voice and snorted with laughter. “Seriously, she’s right. Eat your pretentious sandwich while I try not to fail.”

“That’s no way for Team Science to talk,” Jimmy chided. “We’ll all try not to fail to together.”

“I thought we talked about this...” Brian said. “We need to be Team Engineering now. We’re not in the Faculty of Science anymore.”

“You talked. I ignored you,” Jimmy responded. “Team Science has a certain ring to it, Team Engineering does not...”

“Then...”

“No! Not Team Gearhead, either,” Jimmy said. “Engineering is science!”

“It’s really an art,” Brian insisted. “It’s STEAM now, not STEM. Number Theory is a thing of beauty. It’s art. Majestic.”

“Don’t start on the fucking integers, again,” Jimmy said and stabbed his finger on a lab book marred with scribbles and highlights. “Repeat after me... lab.”

Will took a bite of his sandwich watching the entertainment.

“Laaaaaab,” Brian said, over pronouncing each sound. “Integers are applicable now with the appropriate computer program. The polynomial equivalents...”

“Jacobi’s triple product... blah, blah, blah...”

Will tuned their arguing out while he savoured the richness of spices and texture of the meat.

Beverly leaned in close and whispered to Will, “They better not miss lab again to go get it off in the bathroom.”

Will almost choked before he managed to swallow.

Beverly laughed and clapped Will on the back. “Breathe, Graham. Science and math as foreplay. It’s cute. Not as cute as someone being served literal heart for lunch, mind you.”

“Please don’t call Hannibal cute to his face,” Will asked.

“I didn’t think he would make a sandwich. He doesn’t seem like a sandwich kinda guy.”

“He isn’t,” Will said. “Sandwiches are sort of an inside joke. I wasn’t keen on Offal at first and this was a concession.”

“You’d better eat it all,” Beverly said.

Will stopped and narrowed his gaze. “He talked to you, didn’t he?”

“I will neither confirm, nor deny,” Beverly said, ticking off her fingers. “Fact. You forget to eat. Fact. You get hangry when you forget to eat. Fact. You get weirder when you forget to eat.”

“You’re running out of fingers...”

“Fact. I need you in tip top form for mechanics lab so I can read your lab notes after. So eat.”

On principle Will wanted to toss the sandwich in the nearest trash can, but it was delicious and Hannibal was sending another message. Instead Will took a bite and glared at Beverly.

“Not cool,” he said.

Beverly smiled at him and looked over at Brian and Jimmy who were still arguing, but were now motioning wildly with their hands.

“At least they’re arguing about the lab now,” Beverly commented.

“They’re both wrong,” Will said with a mouthful of half-chewed sandwich. “Their calculations are off for the torque. It’ll mess with the transmission belt and maybe blow the motor. We were warned what would happen if there was another explosion.”

Beverly quickly scribbled something on her notes. “Bitches, you’re both wrong!” Beverly crowed. “Graham says you’re going fuck it up. Look at Section C again.”

“I’ll put the body in your Equilibrium of Rigid Body,” Jimmy muttered under his breath while keeping his eyes locked on Brian, but he grabbed his mechanical pencil and clicked the top.

“Free body, baby,” Brian said back with leer and grabbed his own pencil. “Free body.”

Brian and Jimmy were leaning over their notes, heads pressed together, as they re-examined Section C. Will could overhear them muttering about bearings and drives, each finishing each the other’s sentences.

“You’re notes are fine,” Will said to Beverly.

“I know,” Beverly said. “Theirs would be to if they stopped going off on tangents.”

“They won’t,” Will said. “It’s their thing and they always manage to squeak in before the due date. They feed off each other... make each other better.”

“Are we still talking about Brian and Jimmy or...”

“Don’t,” Will cut her off and looked down at his lunch, taking a big bite.

“Uh huh.” She smirked. “Ya know, your... what are we calling him?”

“Hannibal will do.”

“Nope. Dr. Lecter. I’m not calling him by his first name,” Beverly said. “I don’t have a death wish. I saw your Dr. Lecter starring at you this morning from across the quad. Anyone else might’ve called it an eye fuck.”

Jimmy and Brian were quickly scribbling notes and muttering to each other.

“Don’t say that in front of him,” Will warned.

“I’m not stupid. I swear the only reason Dr. Lecter tolerates us around you is we are the top of our class,” she said. “And before get that look, we both know it’s true. We are all top of our fields in our year. He ran off that mouth-breather in the first week of classes that dared to come to our study group. Dr. Lecter knew he would wash out before the mouth-breather did.”

“Hannibal didn’t do anything,” Will said.

“Oh, please,” Beverly said with a laugh. “That look he gave the mouth-breather was enough to run him off.”

Will took another bite of his sandwich to keep from answering. Brian and Jimmy had moved from scribbling on the back of the paper to scribbling on the table. Another student came into the lounge and headed straight for their table.

“And here comes your other stalker,” Beverly said, nudging Will. “Lucky you.”

The tall young man came up to the table and stood right in Will’s personal space.

“Hey, Will,” he said.

Will kept his gaze firmly on his sandwich and took another bite.

“Hiya, Matthew,” Beverly said. “Ready for mechanics lab?”

Matthew’s hand came to rest on the back of Will’s blue plastic chair and he leaned in closer.

“With Will as my lab partner, of course I am,” Matthew said. “You ready, partner?”

Will nodded, trying to shift away.

Brian and Jimmy stopped working. They both looked up at the same time. They glared at Matthew.

Matthew moved his hand off the back of Will’s chair and patted Will’s shoulder, letting his hand linger even when Will pulled away. He smiled and had the nerve to ruffle Will’s hair, leaning in close to whisper, “See ya in class, Will. I can’t wait.”

Matthew winked at Will and left whistling a off key tune.

“Gross,” Beverly said. “You don’t have to put up with that, Will.”

“He’s lonely,” Will muttered under his breath.

Beverly sighed. “Oh, Will.”

The brown paper wrapper was empty now, only littered with a few crumbs.

“I didn’t pick him as a lab parter,” Will said. “We were assigned to work together.”

“I know,” Beverly said. “This is going to be a long semester. Just let me know if he gets out of line and I’ll kick his ass.”

Will crumpled up the paper and string, tossing it into the nearby garbage can. Mechanics Lab was the least of his worries.

Matthew had been too close...

Matthew had touched him...

Hannibal would know.

Hannibal would smell Matthew on Will on the ride home.

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